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FOR INFORMATION CALL

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Ald. Robert J. Bauman
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Dedicated Funding Source Essential For Public Transit Service

Without a Dedicated Funding Source, Alderman Says Local Transit Projects Won't Likely Get Past Planning Stages

Without a dedicated funding source, Milwaukee business leaders are merely dreaming when talking about major future public transit projects, Ald. Bob Bauman said.

"It's like they're looking through a brochure for a \$250,000 Ferrari when they can barely afford the Volkswagen they have," said Ald. Bauman, referring to business leaders' support for the proposed Kenosha, Racine and Milwaukee (KRM) commuter rail line among other major public transportation initiatives.

"Unless business leaders in southeastern Wisconsin and officials at all levels of government can reach a consensus about how such projects will be paid for – which looks unlikely – they should just stop discussing and studying the projects because all they're doing is making the consultants rich," the alderman said.

Ald. Bauman, chair of the Common Council's Public Works Committee, is proposing a Council resolution for immediate adoption that would put the Council on record as supporting the development of the Kenosha, Racine and Milwaukee (KRM) commuter rail service only if a dedicated funding source is implemented "for both the local share of the capital and operating costs for the operation of the commuter rail service, and the local share of the capital and operating costs for operation of local public transit service within the City of Milwaukee and Milwaukee County."

The resolution will be considered by the Council during its regular meeting tomorrow (Wednesday, January 17) at 9 a.m. in the third floor Council Chamber at City Hall, 200 E. Wells St. Media coverage is welcome.

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Dedicated Transit Funding Source/ADD ONE

The Milwaukee County Transit System – which has experienced fare increases and route and service reductions in recent years – is one of the few big city U.S. transit systems that does not have a dedicated funding source for the local share of capital and operating costs, Ald.

Bauman said. “Clearly, a dedicated funding source for Milwaukee’s public transit system is essential for any expansion or improvement of public transit service in the city or in Milwaukee County,” the alderman said, noting that tens of thousands of Milwaukeeans rely on the MCTS daily to get to work, school, shopping, medical services and entertainment venues.

Various proposals have been studied by the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Transit Authority (RTA) that only fund the local share of the capital and operating costs of the KRM (to the exclusion of local transit service in Kenosha, Racine and Milwaukee). Providing a dedicated funding source for the KRM commuter rail line alone “is not in the best interest of the citizens of the City of Milwaukee,” Ald. Bauman said.